
Preparing for Heart Healthy Dining

Dining out has become a way of life in our culture. While it can be a pleasant social event, you also need to keep your health in mind. Meals eaten out are often loaded with extra calories, fat, and sodium. Here are some tips to help you get ready for dining out:

- **Plan for the day.** When you know you will be dining out, make an extra effort to eat less during the day. Save some of your calorie, fat, and sodium budget so you can enjoy your restaurant meal.
- **Choose your restaurant wisely.** Look for restaurants that have a wide variety of foods that can fit into your meal plan. Avoid “all you can eat” restaurants because portions can be hard to control.
- **Look up nutrition information.** Check online or at the restaurant to see if the restaurant you're dining at has the nutrition information posted. This will allow you to make more heart healthy options.
- **Plan the meal.** Think of the whole meal instead of each course separately. For instance, you can skip the appetizer if you know you want a salad.
- **Look for the healthy selections.** Many restaurants identify menu items that are lower in calories, fat, and sodium. Choose these meals, but remember you still need to watch your portions.
- **Special order your meal the way you want it.** Most restaurants will change the way a menu item is prepared if you ask. Speak to your server and ask for foods to be cooked without salt or extra fat, such as oil or butter. You can also request to have dressings, sauces, and gravy on the side. Substitute an order of French fries with a small green salad and low calorie dressing or a fresh fruit cup, if available.
- **Watch your portion sizes.** Restaurant servings are larger than a standard meal. Share your meal with another person or pack half of your meal in a to-go box before you begin eating. This will help you to avoid eating more than you should.



Tips for Healthy Eating When Dining Out

Breakfast



- Look for fat free or low-fat milk and yogurt options.
- Limit egg yolks to ~2 per week or ask for egg substitute or egg whites. Limit the cheese on your eggs.
- Choose fresh fruit instead of juice.
- Try incorporating more fiber into your breakfast using buckwheat pancakes, steel cut oatmeal, 100% whole wheat, rye or pumpernickel breads or high fiber cold cereals.
- Use 2 slices of 100% whole grain toast, a wrap or an English muffin for a breakfast sandwich instead of a croissant or biscuit.
- Beware of bagels and rolls. They can contain many calories.
- Avoid high fat foods such as hash browns, donuts, muffins, bacon, sausage, corn beef hash and any other Danish or pastry.

Appetizer



- Steer clear of the tempting nibblers before your meal such as bread, crackers, muffins, or tortilla chips.
- Choose appetizers that have not been fried.

Soup





- Pass up soups made with cream or cheese, and choose broth-based soups. Be careful because most soups served in restaurants are high in sodium.

Salad



- Ask for your salad dressing on the side. Dip your fork in the dressing before taking a bite. Ask if a low-fat dressing is available. Vinegar and lemon or lime wedges can add a flavorful twist.
- Choose fewer prepared salads such as potato salad, macaroni salad, or tuna salad. They often are made with mayonnaise. Hold off on salads with a lot of cheese or fried toppings.

Main Course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid cream sauces, cheese sauces, and gravy to decrease the fat and sodium of your meal. • Select foods that are baked, broiled, grilled, roasted, poached, steamed, or stir-fried. Stay away from deep-fried foods because they add extra fat and calories to your meal.
Dessert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desserts can be tricky. Look for desserts that have fresh fruits or low-fat ice cream or yogurt • Share the dessert to split the calories and fat.